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Does COVID-19 PROVE Evolution?

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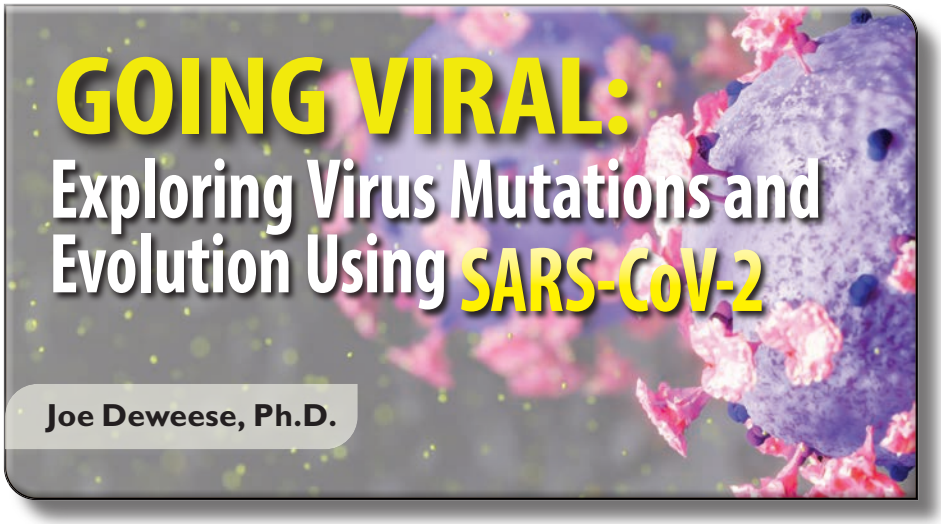
MONKEYPOX— and God Called it (Again)



GOING VIRAL: Exploring Virus Mutations and Evolution Using SARS-CoV-2

Joe Deweese, Ph.D.

Article In Brief...

Though the COVID virus has mutated, no new genetic information has been generated nor have novel features developed as needed if evolution were true. It is clear that viruses as a whole are divinely-designed entities that fulfill important roles in nature.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was written by A.P. auxiliary staff scientist Dr. Deweese who holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Vanderbilt University and serves as Professor of Biochemisty and Director of Undergraduate Research at Freed-Hardeman University.

INTRODUCTION

FOR the past two and a half years, the world has been given a front-row seat to the process of science as the pandemic of SARS-CoV-2 has made its way around the world and back again. This article examines the virus and its components with a goal to understand how the virus works and how it is changing over time. Further, we will seek to consider the implications of viral evolution and step back to think about how viruses fit into a biblical worldview. [For a more extensive study of the nature of SARS-CoV-2, see the online version of this article.]

Before January of 2020, relatively few individuals used the term "coronavirus" in everyday language, much less understood its implications. While there are a few different coronaviruses that cause things like the common cold, prior to SARS-CoV-2, only two had caused major problems in humans: severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). An outbreak of SARS-CoV occurred in 2002-2004, which infected over 8,000 people and killed nearly 10% of those infected.[1] MERS-CoV was associated with the Arabian Peninsula and occurred from 2012-2015 with about a 30% death rate, but a very low transmission rate.[2] As of October, 2021, there have been a total of 2,578 cases with 888 reported deaths (34.4%) since 2012.[3] By contrast, SARS-CoV-2 has spread globally in just over two years with over 419 million cases worldwide and over 5.8 million deaths (~1.4% of those infected) so far according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.[4] Unfortunately, these numbers do not clarify for us the difference between people who died from the effects of COVID versus those who died of other causes but had COVID.

In general, SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV are naturally found in rodents and/or bats but have undergone "zoonotic transmission" to infect humans. Zoonosis is a term used to describe a disease that has undergone "spillover" from vertebrate animals to humans.[5] As you might guess, there are barriers and challenges that prevent many diseases from infecting different organisms. However, some barriers are not insurmountable. Many questions still surround how and what changes took place to give us SARS-CoV-2—were they natural mutations in animal populations or were they part of experimental efforts perhaps aiming to thwart an epidemic? There are those on various sides of these issues.[6]

This article is not intended to settle the question of the origin of the virus or to take a particular side. Instead, we want to ask more fundamental questions: what is different between SARS-CoV-2 and previous deadly coronaviruses? Why does it spread so quickly? What will happen moving forward? And what are the apologetic implications of the coronavirus?

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT MUTATIONS AND NATURAL SELECTION FROM SARS-COV-2 VARIANTS?

ONE way to study viruses is to see how the sequences vary from other known viruses. Interestingly, SARS-CoV-2 is only 79% similar to SARS-CoV.[7] This means that both viruses share about 79% of the same sequence

information. The closest sequences to SARS-CoV-2 are viruses isolated from bats found in Yunnan province 1000+ km from Wuhan, denoted RaTG13 and RmYN02.[8] RaTG13 is the closest, sharing 96.2% identify, while the RmYN02 shares 93.3% identity with SARS-CoV-2 reference sequence (note that the reference sequence is the first sequence that was released by Chinese researchers before the variants). In this context, nucleotide "identity" means that two sequences are **identical** at that percentage of sites. Thus, 100% identity would mean that they have the same nucleotides at all possible sites. In a 30,000 nucleotide sequence, a 90% identity means that 27,000 sites match between two sequences.[9]

Throughout the pandemic, researchers have tracked the changes occurring in the genome of SARS-CoV-2 using advanced DNA sequencing technologies. As a result, there are now over four million SARS-CoV-2 viral sequences for us to compare in the public NCBI Virus Variation database.[10] This is a bit of a unique situation because we've never had such a large pandemic occur while we have had the ability to sequence the genetic information of the virus in real-time worldwide. This massive effort has provided a way to track genomic changes (i.e., mutations in the virus) over time to see what types of changes are occurring and what types of changes are **not** occurring.

In general, we observe the changes typically seen in any organism: deletion, insertion, and single nucleotide changes. Single nucleotide changes are by far the most common. At this point, perhaps you are wondering how many changes are in the variants when compared to the reference sequence. In even the most extreme cases—like the Omicron variant—the total number of nucleotide changes (including insertions and deletions) is around 100 (less than 1%). Thus, for over 99% of the sequence there are no changes.

As of this writing, 10 variants are considered "Variants Being Monitored" (VBM) by the Centers for Disease Control, while two are listed as "Variants of Concern" (VOC): delta and omicron.[11] In reviewing mutation data on these variants, most of the mutations tend to occur in the Spike protein-coding region with additional mutations in the ORF1ab region and some variants showing mutations in the nucleocapsid (N) protein-coding region.[12] Mutations in the Spike protein tend to be focused within the amino terminal domain (the first part of the protein) or the RBD, as noted above. These are the regions that antibodies typically bind, especially those formed through vaccination with the mRNA vaccines.

As seen in Figure 1, Spike protein point mutation sites are mapped onto a three-dimensional model of the protein for the Omicron variant. The mutation sites are highlighted as red spheres. The region in red is the Receptor Binding Domain (RBD). The concentration of red spheres in this area underscores the importance of understanding how this region is changing and what impact that has on viral transmission and treatability. Mutations in this region can result in evasion of antibodies that target Spike protein.[13] In other words, some of these mutations in the Spike protein make this region less able to be bound by antibodies from vaccination and/or prior infection. It is also worth noting that in addition to antibodies, T-cells also respond to SARS-CoV-2 and T-cell response includes binding to Spike (or other viral proteins). Notably, T-cell response in vaccinated and/or prior infected individuals still mostly retain the ability to recognize Omicron.[14]

What can we learn from this? There are a few key takeaways for us to consider. First, mutations in SARS-CoV-2 are still rare in the sense that we do not see widespread mutation throughout the viral genome. This is due to the error correction mechanism and apparently a low tolerance of genetic change. The mutations that are occurring are enabling the virus to survive and

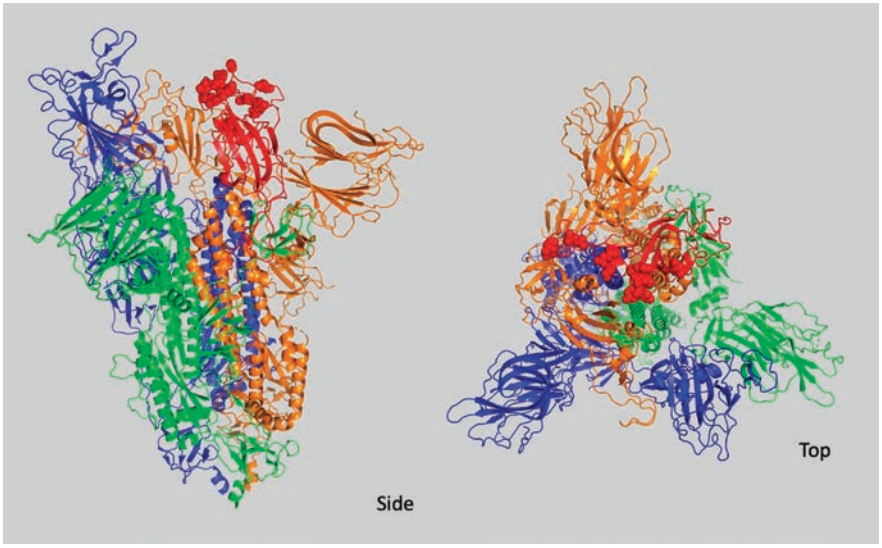


Figure 1: Structure of Spike Protein Showing Region of Receptor Binding Domain. The image is a ribbon diagram of a structure generated using cryo-electron microscopy (PDB ID 6zGG). Spike protein is a trimer (three monomers) shown in blue, green, and orange. The receptor binding domain of the green monomer is colored red and spheres represent sites mutated in Omicron (Some sites are also mutated in other variants).

spread more readily while causing more mild symptoms in general. Thus, you could argue that natural selection is filtering out mutations that do not benefit the virus. As noted by Dutch botanist and geneticist Hugo de Vries, however, "Natural selection may explain the survival of the fittest, but it cannot explain the arrival of the fittest."[15] Natural selection does not provide the mechanism for the origin of new information, which is necessary for the evolution of new viruses and organisms.[16]

Second, the types of changes we are seeing fall into the basic categories of insertions, deletions, and single-nucleotide changes. The largest insertion in the sequences examined was nine nucleotides. Interestingly, this sequence is not found anywhere in the virus or in any of the variants examined except Omicron. There is a similar sequence in the genome (about 4,000 nucleotides away) that is off by one nucleotide, but the author has not seen a lot of speculation around this sequence.

There are some limitations to this brief study. For instance, there are 10s to 100s of thousands of sequences for some of these variants. So, there will undoubtedly be variability among the various samples. Yet, even with such variability, the general themes noted above remain: **no novel sets of information have been generated by the DNA changes observed**. More specifically, no new proteins or enzymatic functions have been observed. Instead, mutation and selection appear to be at work on the existing protein-coding genes, which is why we see most mutations focused on regions like the Spike protein-coding sequence. In order for new features to develop as in the Neo-Darwinian model of evolution, new genetic information is needed, **but we do not observe this occurring**.[17]

SARS-CoV-2 is mutating, but it is also clear that it is still SARS-CoV-2 (i.e., we do not see new functions arising though we do see modification of functions). We are seeing first-hand what types of mutations are possible. Note that this does not necessarily mean that we know what is possible in a living organism—viral growth and mutation have unique constraints. Other studies have argued that mutations tend to modify or break existing features rather than build new ones.[18] This appears to hold true in SARS-CoV-2.

ARE VIRUSES A FORM OF "NATURAL EVIL" THAT SUPPORT A CASE AGAINST GOD?

In considering the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its cost on our world, it is worth asking, why do we have viruses anyway? From a human perspective, it can often seem like all viruses are "bad." Are viruses a "natural evil" created by God to plague the world? After all, the only time the media (or society more generally) tends to focus on viruses is in the context of the seasonal flu or in the case of an outbreak of some deadly virus—like MERS or SARS. In fact, the word "virus" originated from the Latin term for poison.[19] Our language has clear implications for how we view viruses. Do viruses represent a "bad" design on the part of the Creator?

As a little exercise in considering the roles and purposes of viruses, let's first ask: how many types of viruses are there? Current taxonomy of viral species by the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses lists 10,434 species.[20] It seems generally agreed that this is an under-representation of the total number of viruses in nature, as additional viruses continue to be discovered year by year. In support of this idea, it has been stated that there are ~10^{31} bacterial viruses (called bacteriophages) in the biosphere, which exceeds the estimate of the number of stars in the universe![21] Interestingly, only approximately 219 viruses have been found to infect humans.[22] Of these viruses, relatively few cause disease or death in humans.[23] Far fewer have been found to cause epidemics or pandemics.[24] Yet, as humans, we generally focus on these few cases that cause disease rather than on the thousands of viruses (perhaps hundreds of thousands or millions?) that exist throughout nature.[25]

To be clear, the 1918 Spanish flu, HIV, SARS, MERS, and SARS-CoV-2 have all had a major impact on our world. Many lives were lost or dramatically changed because of these viruses and their associated epidemics or pandemics. Yet, the integral role of viruses in nature has not been all negative as will be pointed out below.

Second, if there are so many different viruses, what do they do? Are there natural and ecological functions and roles for viruses? The answer to that is **yes**. In fact, there are **many** functions and roles for viruses in nature. For example, bacteriophages, mentioned above, help control bacterial populations.[26] In addition, bacteriophages can aid in transfer of genes between bacteria, serve as a nutrient repository, and defend bacteria against other bacteria.[27] Further, viruses may also play similar roles in eukaryotes and higher organisms including symbiotic relationships.[28] In humans, infection with GB-virus C has been associated with slowed progression of HIV infection, suggesting that this virus helps block HIV from infecting host cells.[29] Some have argued that the roles of viruses worldwide are so important that life as we know it would not exist without viruses.[30]

So, does coronavirus have a natural role in bats or pangolins? This

is a harder question to answer as few people are looking at this question—the general starting assumption is that viruses are "poison" or "pathogens."[31] Interestingly, this assumption, based upon evolutionary presuppositions, may be impeding our understanding of the roles of viruses in nature. Additional research will be needed to identify and explore such roles.

Consider for a moment: why would God allow viruses? Again, recall that most viruses do not cause problems and disease in humans, and it is reasonable to consider that many viruses have **useful** roles in nature. Could viruses be originally created entities that perhaps have also decayed since the Fall like our own genomes?[32] If viruses were originally created by God to serve specific roles in nature, then it is possible that the nature and roles of viruses have been corrupted over time by genetic mutation.[33] The biochemical components in viruses are highly sophisticated—for example, reverse transcriptase (making DNA from RNA), error-correction, self-assembly, etc. These complex systems are best explained in a **design model**.

This perspective on viruses being designed entities has proved to be a fruitful research endeavor.[34] In fact, understanding the original design of viruses may help us identify the roles of viruses and how those roles have become corrupted over time. This may help us understand virulence and the ability of a virus to spread and mutate, which may help us predict future pandemic threats.

What can we expect moving forward? As we move forward, we can expect that SARS-CoV-2 will remain present continuing to change. The rate of change may slow since the virus is infecting fewer individuals than when it was spreading at its peak. Changes in the virus may enable it to continue to spread and possibly even cause new outbreaks, but the changes also seem to reduce the ability of the virus to cause serious illness in most people. Note that serious illness is still happening, especially in individuals with multiple risk factors, and we need to be serious about looking after those who are most at risk. The good news is that new treatments and approaches are becoming available to help minimize the health impact where possible.

CONCLUSION

SARS-CoV-2 has spread around the world over the last two and a half years and caused major loss of life. Though the virus has mutated during that time, **no new genetic information has been generated** nor have novel features developed as needed by a Neo-Darwinian model. Further, while the origin of this strain of the virus may remain contentious and debated, it is clear that viruses as a whole are **designed** entities fulfilling important roles in nature. It may be hard for us to identify those roles in the present time due to the genetic changes that have taken place in those viruses since the Fall in Genesis 3. Nevertheless, viewing viruses as designed entities that have experienced genetic change and decay since the Fall has served as a valuable framework for research in this area. In addition, this view helps remind us of God's power in creation and of the consequences of sin that have been building since the Fall.

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(cont. on p. 116)

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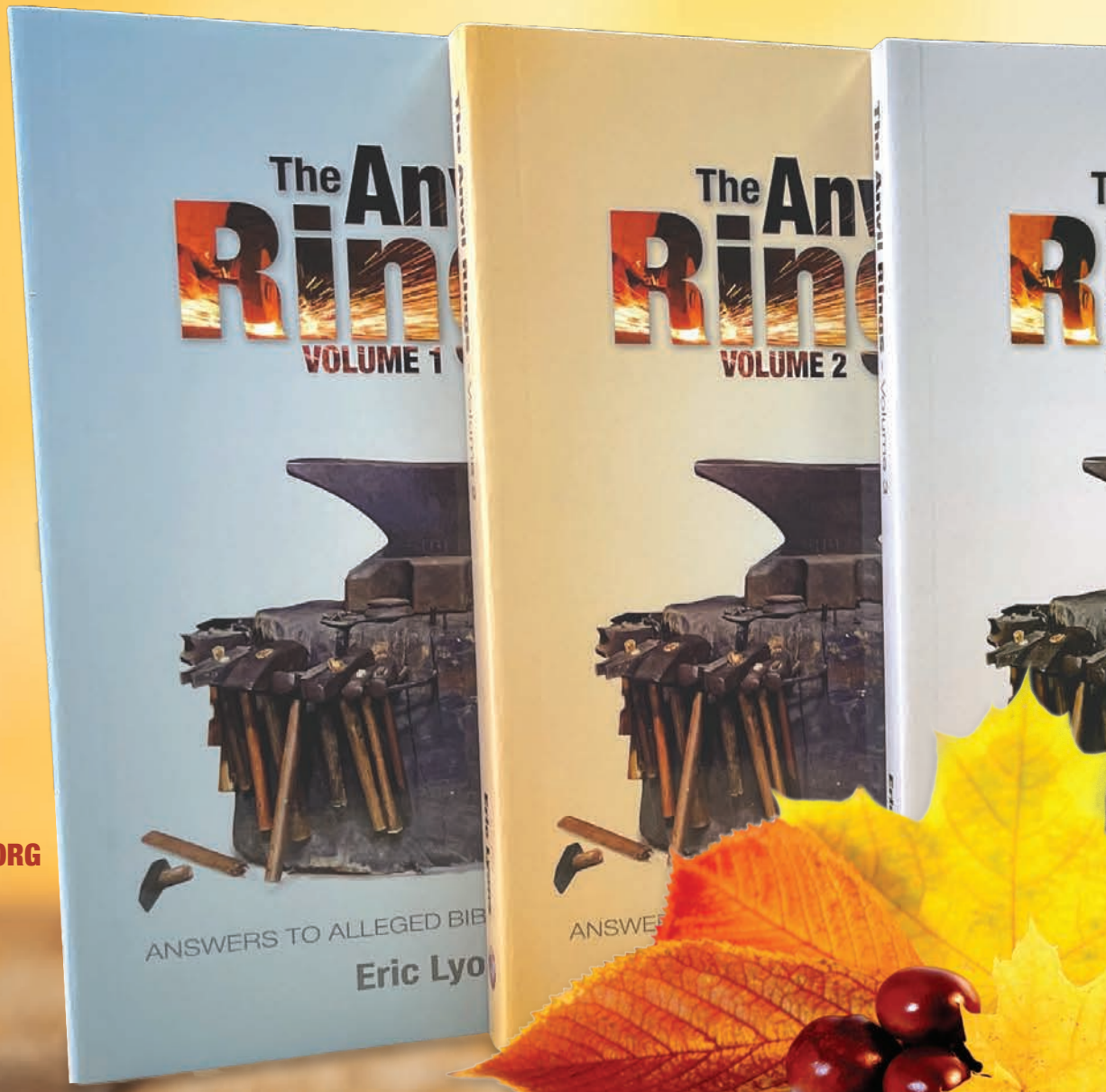

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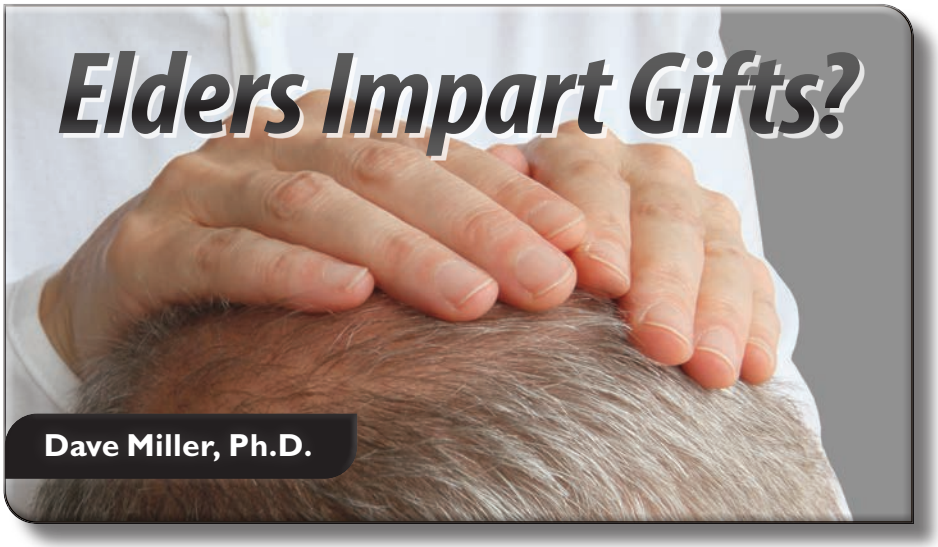

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

THE ability to perform miracles in the first century church was granted by God in essentially two ways: baptism of the Holy Spirit and the laying on of the apostles' hands. The Bible only explicitly mentions the former avenue as occurring twice (Acts 2 and Acts 10), and then only for special and limited purposes, with a third occurrence implied in connection with Paul's unique calling (Acts 9:15; 22:21; Romans 1:5; 11:13; 1 Corinthians 15:8; Galatians 1:16; 2:7-8; et al.). The latter avenue is specifically described by Luke in his account of the initial proclamation of the Gospel to the Samaritans:

> Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that **through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given**, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:14-19).

Since the New Testament expounds no other means by which any person may receive the ability to perform miracles, it inevitably follows that no person living on Earth today has miraculous capability. Holy Spirit baptism was unique, exclusive, and limited at the beginning of the church, and no apostles are alive today to impart miraculous ability to anyone.[1]

Some have challenged the exclusive nature of the role of the apostles in their unique ability to impart miraculous capability by calling attention to the admonition given by Paul to Timothy: "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of **the eldership**" (1 Timothy 4:14). Based on this verse, some insist that the apostles were not the **only** conduit through which God would impart miraculous ability. The "eldership" in the New Testament refers to a group of individuals who, having met certain very specific qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; et al.), were appointed by the congregation where they were members to serve in the capacity of shepherds. Paul appears to indicate in this verse that these men imparted to Timothy the miraculous gift which he possessed.

However, in another passage, Paul indicated that he was the source of Timothy's gift. 2 Timothy 1:6 reads: "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of **my** hands." So which is it? Was Timothy's miraculous ability conferred upon him by Paul, by the eldership, or by both? The answer is seen in a closer examination of the original language, specifically, the use and meaning of two prepositions.

In 2 Timothy 1:6, where Paul claimed sole credit for imparting the gift to Timothy, the Holy Spirit employed the Greek preposition *dia* with the genitive (translated "through") which means "through" or "by means of."[2] However, in 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul alluded to the nature of the eldership's participation on that occasion, he employed a completely different Greek preposition—*meta* (translated "with"). The root meaning of meta is "in the midst of."[3] It serves as a "marker of **attendant circumstances** of something that takes place.... **accompanying** phenomena."[4] Greek grammarian A.T. Robertson indicates that "the idea is rather '**simultaneous with**'" and "**accompaniment** is the dominant note."[5] It means "in association with" or "accompanied by."[6]

In other words, Paul—as an inspired apostle—imparted the miraculous gift to Timothy. It came from God **through** Paul. However, on that occasion, the local eldership of the church was present and participated **with** Paul in the event, lending their simultaneous support and accompanying commendation. After examining the grammatical data on the matter, Nicoll concluded: "[I]t was the imposition of hands by St. Paul that was the instrument used by God in the communication of the charisma to Timothy."[7] Consequently, 1 Timothy 4:14 provides no proof that

miraculous capability could be received through other means in addition to apostolic imposition of hands and the two clear instances of Holy Spirit baptism.

ENDNOTES

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[6] C.F.D. Moule (1959), *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977 reprint), p. 61.

[7] W. Robertson Nicoll ed. (1900), *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 4:127. Cf. Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown (no date), *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2:414; George Williams (1960), *The Student's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel), sixth edition, p. 956. See also G.B. Winer (1870), *A Treatise on the Grammar of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 471—"The instrument, as such, is never expressed by *meta* in good prose: in 1 Tim. iv.14 *meta*...is with, amid imposition of hands (conjointly with the act of imposition)" (italics in orig.).

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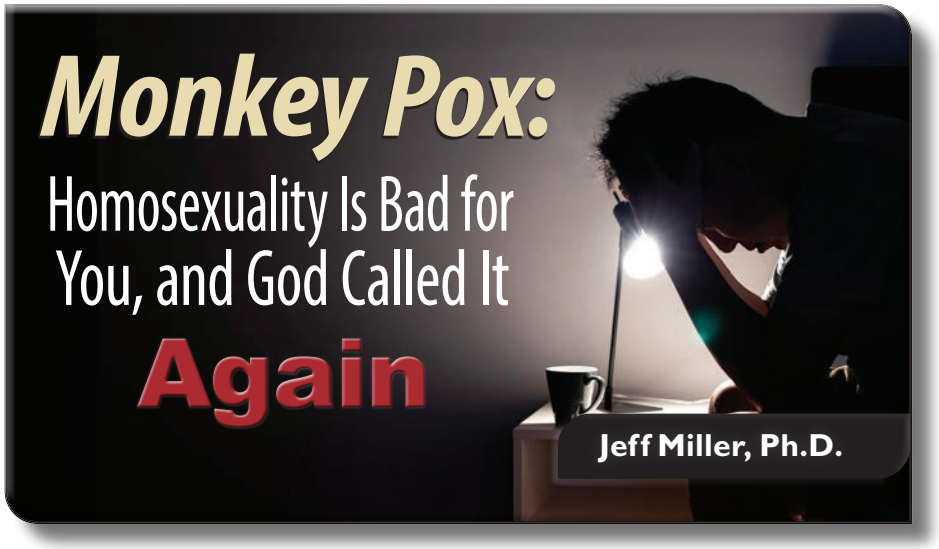

ON August 4th, 2022, the Biden administration declared a public health emergency in response to the outbreak of "monkeypox."[1] The World Health Organization (WHO) had already done so in July.[2] Rashes with painful blisters, facial, genital, mouth, throat, eye, and anal lesions, scabbing, swollen lymph nodes, severe rectal pain, kidney damage, heart inflammation, fever, chills, flu-like symptoms, excruciating pain while eating or going to the bathroom, and throat swelling significant enough to prevent drinking are common with the disease, some leading to hospitalization, permanent damage, scarring, and even death.[3] *New Scientist* reported that "the vast majority of cases have been in **men who have sex with men**, according to the WHO. It reported that 99 per cent of cases have been in this group in the UK, US, Canada and Spain.... The disease is more likely to occur in people who have had multiple sexual partners recently."[4] Rarely is it the case that our brazenly immoral society stumbles across the biblical solution to a problem but, to their credit, one of the solutions being advocated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is homosexual **abstinence**—at least temporarily.[5] Once again, God called it.

Let's face it: we are prone to quickly view "rules" and "laws" that we don't like as unnecessary and overly controlling—to be despised, eliminated, or, at the very least, ignored when possible. With very little deeper investigation, we will reject the oftentimes well-thought-out ordinances that govern our land, the instructions of a parent, or even the rules of God in Scripture. Rarely does it occur to us that we might be ignorant about the wise purposes behind various restrictions. Instead, we are quick to arrogantly assume that we know better than the authorities to which we are charged by God to submit (Romans 13:1-7; Hebrews 13:17; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13; Matthew 22:17-21).[6]

It is true that, as the American government and society at large moves ever farther from making laws that are based on biblical principles, those laws will become more unwise, irrational, and even evil. God's rules, however, are guaranteed to be perfect: rational/reasonable, wise, just, and **for our ultimate good**. "And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, **for our good always**, that He might preserve us **alive**, as it is this day"

When God outlaws a certain behavior, it is for our ultimate good.

(Deuteronomy 6:24). God's laws are not random or pointless. While human laws are not guaranteed to be for our good or to extend our lives, God's laws are **always** for our ultimate good, and will, therefore, tend to improve our lives. And so it is with God's rules about sexual behavior—in this case, specifically, homosexuality.

God implemented clear and decisive regulations against homosexuality—sexual relations with another person of one's own gender:

- "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error" (Romans 1:26-27, ESV).
- "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **homosexuals**,[7] nor **sodomites**, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were** some of you..." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Again, when God outlaws a certain behavior, it must be for our ultimate good, regardless of whether or not we understand why or how that might be true in every case.[8] As regards homosexuality, the rationale for God's directives are **abundantly clear**.

As we have documented elsewhere,[9] homosexuality is a toxic lifestyle that is both physically and psychologically detrimental to one's health—not to mention the collateral damage caused for others in the process.[10] Based on the statistical evidence, there can be no debate that the homosexual lifestyle is characterized by highly increased levels of sexual violence, substance abuse, psychological issues, shortened lifespans, suicide, and diseases such as Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HPV, anal cancer, and HIV/AIDS.

Homosexuality is a toxic lifestyle that is both physically and psychologically detrimental to one's health.

That truth is once again being highlighted by monkeypox, the latest worldwide outbreak of another disease that is undeniably associated with homosexual behavior.[11] If we would but listen to the sexual commandments given by our loving God for our good, things would "go well" for us (Deuteronomy 4:40). Sadly, all to often, we refuse.

> "Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, "**We will not walk in it**"'" (Jeremiah 6:16).[12]

ENDNOTES

1 Bradford Betz (2022), "Biden Administration Declares Monkeypox a Public Health Emergency," *Fox News* on-line, August 4, https://www.foxnews.com/health/biden-administration-declare-monkeypox-public-health-emergency.

2 "Monkeypox Declared a Global Health Emergency by the World Health Organization" (2022), *United Nations: UN News*, July 23, https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1123152.

3 Jason Arunn Murugesu (2022), "Monkeypox Emergency," *New Scientist*, 255[3397]:7, July 30; "Monkeypox: Signs and Symptoms" (2022), *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, August 5, https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/symptoms.html; Tina Hesman Saey (2022), "Monkeypox Is a Global Health Crisis," *New Scientist*, 202[3]:7, August 13.

4 Murugesu, emp. added.

5 "Take a temporary break from activities that increase exposure to monkeypox until you are two weeks after your second dose" ["Monkeypox: Safer Sex, Social Gatherings, and Monkeypox" (2022), *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, August 5, https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/sexualhealth/index.html].

6 Excepting, of course, any restrictions that violate God's Law (Acts 5:29; Ephesians 6:1—"in the Lord").

7 Or "catamites"—the individual in a homosexual relationship on the receiving end of the act.

8 While a small child may not understand why his parents require him to eat his vegetables, not play in the street, or touch the electrical socket, he should trust his parents to have good reasons for their rules.

9 Jeff Miller (2021), "Homosexuality: Society, Science, & Psychology [Part 3]," *Reason & Revelation*, 41[2]:15-20, https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2102-web.pdf.

10 E.g., those who are passed diseases by others, the effect of unbridled sexual behavior on societies, etc. [Jeff Miller (2015), "God's Word: Right About Sex," Apologetics Press, March 22, https://apologeticspress.org/gods-word-right-about-sex-5138/.]

11 Specifically, men having sex with other men.

12 For a thorough study of the biblical, scientific, and psychological data regarding homosexuality, see Jeff Miller and Dave Miller (2021), *Homosexuality: Scripture, Society, Science, and Psychology* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

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NOTE FROM The Editor

The Anvil Rings—Boxed Set

We regularly receive letters, phone calls, and emails requesting assistance in answering supposed biblical discrepancies and/or contradictions. The fact is that it is a simple matter for a skeptic or infidel to hurl a barrage of alleged discrepancies at a believer. But it is not always an equally simple matter for a believer to respond. Plus, the problem is exacerbated by the fact that, at first blush, the accuser may "sound right." What the believer must remember is that, as Charlie Brown (of *Peanuts* comic strip fame) once said to his sometimes-nemesis Lucy: "You're not right; you just **sound** right!"

Nevertheless, many of the supposed discrepancies cannot be answered with a mere "wave of the hand." More often than not, they require multiple hours of in-depth research—and an unwavering commitment to Truth. Unfortunately, at times those who are confronted with these so-called errors do not know how to respond, are unwilling or unable to invest the time and effort required to prepare a reasoned response, or already have a faith that is so weak that it crumbles at the first hint of controversy. And that's where the work of Apologetics Press becomes so critically important.

Eric Lyons has been working steadily since 2003 to produce volumes that provide definitive responses to the host of allegations leveled against the Bible's inerrancy and accuracy. Three such volumes have now been completed. We are releasing the entire series as a boxed set, complete with freshly designed individual covers. These volumes treat literally scores of allegations in such a way that the truth-seeker is duly impressed and convinced that the Bible's critics are powerless to establish their contentions. Indeed, the Bible's supernatural origin is on constant display when one takes the time to peer into its incredible contents. Truly, the writers of the Bible "did not follow cunningly devised fables"; rather, "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"—"things which angels desire to look into" (2 Peter 1:16,21; 1 Peter 1:12).

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Dave Miller

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